

TRUE BY THE SUN

—BY—
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SYNOPSIS

Jim Fielding, one of the "lost generation" who had left college in the depression and is unable to find a job, arrives at Glendale to visit his friends the MacPhersons. Mac had formerly been gardener at his uncle's estate and now works for T. H. Vaughn of "Meadowbrook." Jim is tired of being supported by his married sister Kay. While he still can marry Lenore, an attractive divorcee who is in love with him and has an easy life because of her wealth, his mind rebels. Stopping at the village drug store for a sandwich, he meets Dolly, a pretty soda fountain girl. When he inquires about the Vaughns, she asks if he is a friend of "Cecily's." She also entrusts a message to Tommy, young son of the family and tells him how to reach the Vaughns' estate. Approaching the house, Jim encounters a tomboyish little girl, fishing. She is started and falls in the brook. Incensed at first, she discovers she likes Jim and he learns that she is Susan Vaughn. He discovers Cecily is her older sister. He sees Tommy, a youth of eighteen who imagines he is in love with Dolly. Jim explains his impetuous position to the MacPhersons. They tell him that Mr. Vaughn is recovering from a nervous breakdown and has a widower since Sue was a little child. Mrs. MacPherson suggests that Mac give Jim a job as handyman. Jim goes for a walk to think it over and picks up a horse shoe. Soon Cecily, a lovely young girl, appears, riding a limping horse. Jim scolds her when he sees the animal has thrown a shoe. There is an angry scene. Jim's ire cools and he is intrigued as he thinks about her. He tells the MacPhersons he wants to stay and assumes his duties as handyman. He sees Dolly again. She explains that she has been seeing Tommy, but regards him with amusement. When Cecily returns from a house-party she asks him to come to her. "I wonder how long you'll stay?" Jim asks. Cecily says she is a love message to Cecily from Jeremy Clyde, a young actor of whom her father disapproves. Cecily accuses Jim of being hired to spy on her. Jim comes upon Sue sobbing rebelliously after an encounter with Cecily. Everybody is helpless to quell her. Jim soothes her. Jim writes Lenore, asking to avoid attending a house-party to which she has invited him. Tommy is afraid his father will be wrathful if he discovers his attachment for Dolly and asks Jim to intercede with her to get back letters he has written. Jim decides to use the supposed affair with Dolly as a club over Tommy to make him catch up in his studies.

CHAPTER V—Continued

"Where are we going?" Dolly asked.

"Have you been to 'Dutch's'?" Jim asked.

"Dutch's? Whew!" The exclamation was a whistling sound of pleasure and surprise.

"Is it that sort of place?" Jim asked. "I've never been there in the evening."

"But I'm not wearing my emeralds," Dolly objected.

"Don't you want to go?"

"Oh, yes!" He knew that she was pleased. Excitement bubbled in her voice. But, after a moment, she said, "You needn't, you know, I mean it's expensive." "Dutch's?" I'd just as soon go somewhere else. Maple Grove or 'Greenie's' or just ride."

"Hush up!" Jim said, pretending to be offended. "I told you this was an occasion. I have a week's wages in my pocket. Fifteen dollars! Let's shoot the roll!"

"Okay, mister!" Excitement bubbled again in her odd husky voice.

Jim liked having her there beside him, warm and friendly, as undemanding as a kitten. He was touched by her consideration. If fifteen dollars would buy her a handsome evening, certainly she should have it.

They left the highway, presently, and turned into the road that led through Cherry Hollow. The borough, set in a wooded depression between gently rolling hills, lay before them after a time. In the moonlight it was charming, a village from Hans Christian Andersen, a stage-set for the Pied Piper of Hamelin. The artfully quaint houses, located apparently at random among dogwoods and pines and wild cherry trees, were inhabited by artists, more or less successful writers, musicians, a sprinkling of well-gifted individuals who enjoyed living in an unconventional community. A stream ran through the hollow, crossed by bridges, dammed, here and there, into pools rimmed with iris and splattered with lily pads.

"This is a cute place, isn't it?" Dolly remarked as the MacPhersons' coupe followed a winding lane.

"Crazy," Jim replied. "The houses couldn't have been built according to an architect's blueprints. I think they sprang up like mushrooms some morning after a heavy rain. This road seems to end in a garden wall. Where do we go from here?"

They had some difficulty in finding their way out. Eventually, however, after an interval of bumping along picturesque but rutty lanes they found the road they had lost.

"This is right," Dolly said encouragingly. "There's the theater over there."

The Cherry Hollow theater was located beside the stream in a depression at the end of the borough.

Jim had known of it before he came to "Meadowbrook," had passed it once or twice riding about the country on his free afternoons. Now as they approached the low stone playhouse, he diminished the speed of the car. The theater had a significance for him aside from its history, its location, its distinctive reputation. Cecily's friend, Jeremy Clyde, was connected in some way with the company here. Perhaps Cecily was here tonight. Perhaps that was where she'd been going when she sped past him through the village.

A performance was obviously in progress. The windows were rectangles of light. A number of cars were parked at the side of the playhouse. But the fawn-colored roadster was not there.

"Going in?" Dolly asked, amiably.

Jim realized, then, that the MacPhersons' coupe had been advancing at a snail's pace, that in the moment Dolly spoke he had stalled the engine.

"Sorry," he said, a little disconcerted. "It's interesting, isn't it?"

The car, its motor purring again, picked up speed on the open road. Dolly told Jim of a "show" she'd seen once when she went to visit her aunt in New York. She recalled the comedian's jokes and sang the hit number of the musical score in her engaging voice. The rhythm was perfect. She remembered all of the words. By the time they had reached "Dutch's," Jim had lost the feeling of being a little out of sorts. They drew up before the roadhouse, singing in a jovial and discordant duet—

"Sing hallelujah, hallelujah!
Sing hallelujah, all the day!"

Jim parked the car and opened the door for Dolly.

The orchestra wore Bavarian costumes. The drummer looked like Old King Cole in suspenders and bare pink knees. The dance floor in the garden was dimly lighted and moonlight sifted down through the branches of lofty trees. Dolly danced with spirit and faultless rhythm, the white beret pressed against Jim's shoulder, the red sandals twinkling across the floor.

Her cheek pressed his shoulder. Her slim rounded body felt firm, buoyant, held lightly in his arms. There was something about Dolly, something piquant, something moving.

They sat in a stall, separated from other stalls by sapling screens covered with vines. A bulb in a swinging lantern made a rosy pleasant light.

"Skoal!" Jim lifted his mug and smiled at Dolly across the tablecloth checkered in blocks of red and white.

Dolly glanced about the garden, her eyes shining, her cheeks naturally pink under the film of raspberry rouge. People were coming in crowds, smart looking people, Jim observed, his eyes following Dolly's dowagers and debutantes, men with a ruddy country look and perfectly tailored clothes, college boys and boys of Tommy's age.

"There's the Patton girl who's to be married soon," she informed Jim, indicating a party just entering the garden.

"The redhead?" Jim asked, not particularly interested.

"No, the dark one. And that's the man she's going to marry. They're friends of Cecily's. She's to be a bridesmaid at the wedding."

"Yes?" Jim was still apparently indifferent. But the small vivacious brunette held his attention now. She had, or was to have, a homespun counterpane for a shower gift. Cecily had seen Mrs. MacPherson unpacking his trunk. Cecily! Where was she now? . . . He brought his straying attention back to Dolly.

"You know," he said looking at her intently, "you don't look like the sort of woman who drives young men to the ends of the earth."

The flax-blue eyes, rayed with mascaraed lashes, widened in surprise.

"I?" she asked. "The ends of the earth?"

Jim nodded.

"But who?" she asked. "You're kidding. You've got me mixed up with Greta Garbo. I'm laughing."

"It's no laughing matter, young lady," Jim maintained a grave expression. "A young man confided in me tonight." He took a crumpled envelope from his pocket. "Here's his farewell message. I hope it will teach you a lesson."

She took the envelope from Jim, glanced at the inscription.

"Oh, Tommy!" Amusement glinted in her eyes. "What's it all about. I thought he'd jilted me."

"He wants the letters he's written you. You've kept them, I suppose."

"Oh, yes!" She laughed. "They're tied up with pink ribbons and pressed forget-me-nots. Why does he want them?"

"He's afraid you may sue him for breach-of-promise."

"Well I'll—!" A sort of amused tenderness replaced the startled expression in her eyes. "I guess I shouldn't have gone out with him. Didn't you tell him? I mean, you don't think I'd do anything so—so crazy, do you?"

"No to both questions," Jim replied.

"Why not?"

"If you don't mind, I'm going to use you to make Tommy work off his school conditions."

She slipped the letter, unopened, into the pocket of her coat.

"I'm a girl scout. No, I don't mind." She glanced at him quickly, shrewdly. "What do you care?"

she asked. "About Tommy, I mean. Or is he part of your job?"

"He seems to be. I don't know. He's a nice kid."

Dolly looked away.

"You're losing interest in me," he said plaintively. "You keep looking off over there. Who is it? Somebody you know?"

"It's Cecily Vaughn," she said. "Over there in the booth beside the orchestra. She's with the Clyde fellow from the theater."

Cecily sat with her elbows propped on the table, her chin resting in the cupped palms of her hands. Jim, from his position, at the other end of the dance floor, saw her profile, the curls over her ears under a small soft hat, her straight nose, her firm round chin, her long slender throat melting into the ruffled blouse.

His eyes turned from Cecily to her companion. Jeremy Clyde was a dark romantic-looking young man with a beautiful profile and hair a ripple too wavy. He was slight but well-built and not much taller than Cecily. He didn't look "artistic." He was immaculately dressed in clothes conventional in material and cut. But he did look "pretty," somehow, and, somehow, again, well aware of the fact.

The orchestra made preliminary sounds. In a moment the melody of a waltz floated out into the night.



"You've Got Me Mixed Up With Greta Garbo."

Jim remained seated at the table, his eyes, almost without his knowledge and certainly without his full consent, fixed upon the stall in which Cecily sat with Jeremy Clyde. Presently they rose, pushed back their chairs, walked out upon the floor.

They danced well together, silent, perfectly synchronized, absorbed in the music and in each other. Jim watched them, held in a curious suspense, as Cecily and her partner approached the end of the floor. Would she see him, speak to him? It may have been the intensity with which he watched them that attracted her attention. It may have been that she had seen him previously and knew where he was sitting. At any rate, as her partner turned her rhythmically at the end of the floor, Cecily looked directly at Jim, smiled and lifted her hand in an almost imperceptible gesture. Jim returned the salutation.

A sharp exclamation came from Dolly. When he looked at her Jim saw that her eyes were glittering.

"Did you see that?" she asked.

"See what?" Jim shook himself out of a mild sort of daze.

"That Jeremy Clyde!" Dolly snapped open a vanity case with a vicious thumb nail.

"What about him?"

"He gave me the run-around. Looked right through me, the bum!"

"Do you know him—well?"

"Well enough!" Dolly slapped powder against her nose. "I've had a couple of dates with him and when he comes over to meet Miss Vaughn, he hangs around the store. I don't like him, understand. I think he's a lizard. But he can't high-hat me and call it a day. I'll—!" Her expression changed, softened. She laughed shakily. "The storm's over. Forget it. I'm awfully sorry." She snapped the lid of the vanity case and smiled across the table at Jim. "Well, Uncle Ambrose," she said, "if your rheumatism isn't too painful tonight, let's hobble around the floor."

But her handsome evening was spoiled. Her gaiety was forced; and, sooner than Jim had expected, very soon after Cecily and her escort left the garden, she suggested that it was getting late and he'd better take her home.

CHAPTER VI

Cecily was waiting for him when he returned to "Meadowbrook." The instant he saw her car standing in the lower end of the drive, Jim felt that he had known she would be there. The fawn-colored roadster blocked his progress.

"Good evening," he said distantly.

"I have a flat tire," she announced.

"You could have run up to the garage on the rim."

"Could but didn't," she said airily.

"Why didn't you?"

"I thought you would be coming along this way soon."

"Oh! Well, I won't try to fix it

here. Drive on up to the garage."

"You drive for me." It was scarcely a command. Her voice was as soft as silk. "It's so hard to steer with a flat on the front wheel." And taking his acquiescence for granted she moved over from under the steering wheel.

Jim opened the door and took the place she had vacated.

"You don't sound very—clubby," she said. "Are you hungry or sleepy or anything?"

"No."

"That's good. I want to talk."

"But why to me?"

"Oh, enemies intrigue me. May I have a cigarette?"

Jim supplied a cigarette and a light. In the flare of the match he saw distinctly the golden lights in her eyes. His hands were aware of her. He flicked the match into the drive.

"Thank you." She made herself comfortable again. "Did you have a pleasant evening?"

"Very pleasant."

"Dutch's is fun. Good orchestra. I didn't know that the girl in the drug-store was a friend of yours."

"She's a nice kid," he said. "Amusing. Good dancer."

"I'm sure she is." Cecily's voice was silken. "I mean no disparagement. You needn't get out your duelling pistols."

He deserved that, Jim thought. He needn't have defended Dolly so vigorously.

"Jim," she said, breaking a lengthening silence. "Will you do something for me?"

"I'm afraid I can't," he said briefly. He'd thought that to put her in her place would give him a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction. It wasn't working out that way. He felt a little embarrassed, instead. He'd sounded like a prig.

"It isn't what you think," she assured him. "I don't care if you tell Father that I was with Jerry tonight. That isn't important. Father knows how I feel about Jerry. What I want you to do for me is important."

Jim continued silent.

"I mean, will you hear my side of the story?" she continued, in earnest now, the bantering tone gone out of her voice. "Even if we are enemies—Let's call it a court-room confession. The prisoner at the bar has a right to be heard, hasn't he? You know only Father's side. Jim," she said, "it isn't infatuation. I'm awfully in love with Jerry."

He hadn't expected a statement so simple and sincere. He hadn't expected directness from Cecily. This frank appeal to his sympathies was more devastating than cajolery or tricks.

"Father's so pig-headed," she went on. "He is, Jim. He's as obstinate as a mule."

"That doesn't mean I'm not fond of Father," she continued. "I am fond of him and proud of him. But he is pig-headed. I think it's stupid to be fond of people blindly, to admire your father just because he is your father, if he isn't an admirable person. It doesn't make you love people less to know their weaknesses. Sometimes it makes you love them more."

"If Mother had lived it would have been different," she went on, after a moment. "Father adored her. After she died he did nothing but work. We've never known him until this summer. He doesn't know us at all. He's never paid any particular attention to us, except to blow us up when he couldn't avoid the issue."

She paused, turned to him with an apologetic smile. "Am I boring you unbearably? Tell me if I am. That wouldn't be a tactful approach to a request."

"You aren't boring me," Jim assured her. "I'm interested."

"You see," she went on presently, "I want to do something with my life. I found that out the winter I was a debutante. It was fun at first but I got awfully bored. I wanted to do something. I told you once that I'm the tortoise-shell cat who thought she was a lion. I look like somebody who does interesting things, at least to myself I do, and I'm always sure that I'm going to be a shining success. But I have no particular talents."

"One," Jim said. "You dance beautifully. And one other, at least, you play a swell game of tennis."

"But—I don't do either well enough," she replied. "I wanted to be terribly interested in something. I was getting discouraged, and then I met Jerry." Her voice caressed the name. "I found Jerry," she went on, "and I found myself. I knew that Jerry was my job. Jerry has more than a touch of genius. But he needs a tremendous amount of encouragement and sympathy and understanding."

"How old are you, Cecily?" Jim asked, moved by her sincerity, vaguely alarmed for her, unaware that he was asking her a personal question or that he had addressed her, intimately, using her name.

"Twenty," she replied. "I know what you're thinking," she added. "You're thinking that I'm pathetically young and romantic and idealistic."

"No," he protested. "No, you aren't."

"But I had to tell you all this so you'd understand," she went on. "I want Father to know Jerry. Father has the quaint idea that actors and artists are lily-like creatures, indolent and as soft as mush, with no what he terms moral fiber. They aren't. Jerry isn't, at least. He can beat me at tennis and swim like a fish. He's well read and well informed. He's serious about his work. I want Father to know him."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Household Questions

Items of Interest to the Housewife

Never fasten suspenders below the reinforced hems of stockings. Wash stockings with lukewarm lather and squeeze out gently—they'll ladder if they are wrung.

A pinch of alum added to the water when washing blue or green articles of clothing will prevent the colors from running.

Two or three slices of bacon placed on top of a liver loaf during baking adds to the flavor.

Press woollens the right side up with a woolen pressing cloth. Apply moisture to muslin cloth on top of wool and press with hot iron.

Don't use any kind of artificial heat for drying stockings. Hang by the toes in an airy place to dry and don't fold away damp.

A tablespoonful of vinegar will soften glue that has become hardened in a bottle.

Ice box cookie dough can be packed in pound butter cartons, loaf pans or small bowls, or it can be shaped into rolls 2 inches in diameter and wrapped in waxed paper. The dough should be chilled 24 hours or longer and

then cut into thin slices using a sharp knife dipped frequently in cold water.

The stock left from cooked spinach makes a valuable addition to vegetable soup.

Wash sweaters on a windy day, then put in a pillow case or twine bag and hang out to dry. Shake often until dry. All knit or crocheted articles should be dried in this way if you want them to keep their shape.

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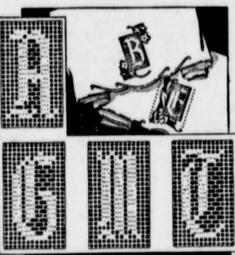
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